1965

A Survey of Several Bases Representative Nongraded Schools Use in Grouping Their Students

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A SURVEY OF SEVERAL BASES REPRESENTATIVE NONGRADED SCHOOLS USE IN GROUPING THEIR STUDENTS

BY

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A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree Master of Science, Major in
Education, South Dakota State
University

1965

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This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Advisor — Date

Head, Education Department — Date July 27, 1965

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer is deeply indebted to Dr. Waldo Anderson, Professor of Education at South Dakota State University, for his helpful guidance and stimulating suggestions in the development of this research thesis. The writer also wishes to thank the faculty members who illumined the many paths to which this research problem took her, and her husband who especially provided encouragement for this research project.

APK

LIST OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The people of America have great faith in the value of education. They believe that the success of a democratic society is based upon the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Such procurement, it is felt, allows citizens the ability to make intelligent decisions when voting and when deciding upon public issues. With individual progress, it is believed, comes national progress.

Individual progress in learning is affected by many variables. Kingsley and Garry[1] group all variables under three headings: individual, task, and environmental variables. Some of these factors are controllable and some are inherent in the learner. One of these, which we are able to control through its organization or structure, is the environment of the school. The organization of the school, then, is of utmost importance.

However, the organizational structure alone cannot insure individual progress, for a philosophy and goal commensurate with this pattern must be accepted by all those involved in the program. With such acceptance, the needs will be fulfilled so that the goals can be reached in the light of the philosophy set forth by the school system.

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[1]Howard L. Kingsley and Ralph Garry, The Nature and Conditions of Learning. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957, pp. 15-16.

The objectives or goals for each individual should vary in accordance with those uncontrollable variables existent within him. The intensive studies by Terman and others have revealed that children differ not only physically, emotionally, and socially, but also intellectually. Knowledge that all children cannot learn at the same rate because of these differences has brought about innovations in philosophy, organization, curriculum, and methods.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Since there is so much variation among and within individuals, the problem of staging the best setting for learning must be dealt with carefully. The definitions of certain terms, germane to the problem, follow:

Grade. An organization whereby a group of students of the same chronological age is placed under the direction of one teacher for instruction of specially-assigned subject-matter for one year.

Graded School Organization. An arrangement whereby pupils are classified according to chronological age, with advancement to the following grade the next year upon satisfactory completion of the required course of study.

Gradedness. A chronological classification of students which requires them to complete specific courses of study each year to secure promotion to the next grade the following year.

Vertical Organization. Classification of students in grades for regular movement upward from a point of admission to a point of departure.

Horizontal Organization. Classification of an identified cluster of students among the available teachers.

Lock-step. A process whereby students are consigned to a grade and subjected to completion of a required amount of work within the school year.

The Nongraded or Ungraded School. A vertical arrangement whereby promotion is based on units of achievement rather than units of time.

Nongrading or Ungrading. A vertical arrangement in which grade labels are removed from classes so that a philosophy of continuous progress at individual rates may be fulfilled.

Nongradedness. A state allowing for a philosophy of continuous progress at individual rates.

Continuous Progress. The movement of youngsters, according to their own rates of achievement, along the vertical line of progression in a nongraded school.

Levels. Steps or sequential divisions of skills, as in reading, arithmetic, or spelling, to be achieved without a time limit.

Homogeneous Grouping. A process whereby pupils are grouped for instruction according to certain predetermined bases or factors. Most common among such factors or bases are age, sex, ability, and achievement.

Heterogeneous Grouping. A process whereby pupils are grouped for instruction without regard to factors such as age, sex, ability, and achievement.

Redeployment. That which takes place when children in a graded school are taken out of their grades for one subject during the day in order that they may be regrouped in a situation where the skills taught are commensurate with their level of achievement in that subject.

Dual Progress Plan. An arrangement whereby half the day is spent in grades for core subjects such as English and Social Studies, and the other half is spent in an ungraded situation with the remaining subjects.

Self-contained Classroom. The practice wherein students are placed under the jurisdiction of a single teacher and remain in a single classroom for the major part of the school day.

Departmentalization. The practice wherein groups of students are moved to various rooms under different teachers for the core subjects such as social studies, English, science, and mathematics. A child needs to repeat only those subjects in which he did unsatisfactory work.

APPLICATIONS OF THE TERMS

The traditional elementary school allows children generally six or eight successive steps beginning with the kindergarten and moving through the sixth or eighth grade in six or eight years. Special subject matter is assigned at each grade level and textbooks are prepared for each grade. Children refer to themselves as being in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade. Goodlad and Rehage[1] state that "The pieces fit together in an orderly fashion with a year of work for a grade of vertical progress through the school as the common denominator." This, then, is the vertical form of school organization in practice.

A second form, the horizontal pattern, must also be included in a description of typical school organizations, or the description will be incomplete. Goodlad and Rehage[2] state that the horizontal patterns center their attention around: a) the children, b) the curriculum, or c) the teacher's qualifiestions. Futhermore, if the children are the prime consideration in establishing a pattern of horizontal organization, then a choice between homogeneity (likeness) and heterogeneity (difference) in pupils selected for each class must be made. If the choice is for homogeneity, the criterion of likeness may be achievement, interest, ability, age, size, or a combination of these. The writers referred to earlier in this paragraph suggest that,

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[1] John I. Goodlad and Kenneth Rehage, "Unscrambling the Vocabulary of School Organization," National Education Association Journal, 51:34-36, November, 1962.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

if the curriculum is the primary consideration, the basis for setting up class groups may be either the separate subjects or various combinations of subjects. If the primary consideration is teacher qualification, the self-contained classroom or departmentalization are the choices. The horizontal form of organization, then, results when a cluster of students is divided into groups and assigned to teachers.

Since the clustering of students in a graded school is based on chronological age and since textbooks and subject-matter are assigned for each grade level, all children are expected to learn the same things at the same time, even if some are not ready, capable, or sufficiently motivated to do so. Teachers may do their best to individualize teaching, but frustration and defeat may easily occur when they realize, for example, that the range in mental age and achievement at the fourth grade level covers a span of approximately four years. Since a given amount of material is to be learned at each grade level, we say that the child is locked in at this step until he has accomplished his goal or until the allocated block of time has been consummated. This lock-step is a barrier to progress for many students.

The removal of the lock-step, or ungrading, permits students to make continuous progress at their own rates. DiLorenzo and Salter[1] contend that ungrading "is an administrative device for putting into practice a democratic philosophy that emphasizes the value of the

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[1]Louis T. DiLorenzo and Ruth Salter, "Co-operative Research on the Nongraded Primary," The Elementary School Journal, 65:269, February, 1965.

individual child." Since progress is continuous, the bad effects of nonpromotion are not in existence in this plan and all students are allowed to move vertically at their own paces.

Usually the levels are grouped into the primary and intermediate blocks. The primary block consists of the traditional first three grades and the intermediate block includes the traditional fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. The number of years spent in either the primary or intermediate block may be more or less than the traditional amount, for promotion is based on individual progress rather than on time spent in a grade. The curriculum for this plan is organized into units of achievement rather than units of time. Thus, a child in a nongraded primary unit may take four years to cover the work if he is slow or immature while the academically talented child may cover the same work in as short a time as two years.

The units of achievement are often called levels or steps. There may be eight, ten, twenty, or any number. These levels vary in number with the situation and with the individuals involved. The levels are usually in reading, but some schools have arithmetic and spelling levels as well. These vary from school to school. Certain skills are required at each level, and, when these skills are attained, the child is moved on to the next level. There is no penalty for taking more time than others do in completing a given level.

There are other variations of the nongraded form of organization. Some plans utilize nongrading in just a portion of the day: pupils are taken out of their grades for a time and are placed with others who

have achieved the same degree of learning (or proficiency) in a particular subject. They work at their own paces and are moved to the next level in accordance with their individual progress.

Another plan which utilizes nongrading for part of the program was begun by George D. Stoddard in 1958. It is called the dual-progress plan, for it provides that students in the upper grades of the elementary school progress on a grade-level basis in physical education and in the English-social studies "core". Meanwhile they are allowed to progress in mathematics, science, arts and crafts, and music on a non-grade level basis. Special teachers are provided in each of the curricular areas mentioned above. The student spends half of his time in the "core" class, composed of his grade mates, and the remaining time in the study of the other areas with students having the same level of ability or in a homogeneous group. This plan employs nongrading part of the time only.

The philosophy and the ability of the teacher are probably more important than any plan of grouping. As stated previously, because there is so much variation among and within individuals, the organizational dimensions which mold the educational setting are very important.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The nongraded school is a form of school organization which has a philosophy commensurate with the concept of recognition of individual differences. It has sought to eliminate barriers to progress in order

that the philosophy of continuous progress inherent in the plan might be realized. A real question is raised as to how students are grouped initially and later as they progress up through the vertical levels of their education. This study is a survey of the bases employed in representative nongraded schools.

DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

The schools involved in this study are all public schools; no private or parochial schools were contacted. The study is further limited to the kindergarten through the sixth grade. These schools were selected because they were mentioned in the literature and in responses by various authorities contacted. A formal listing of nongraded schools is not available at this time, but the United States Office of Education is exploring the matter to determine if they are nongraded in philosophy as well as organization. Perhaps later, a list may be compiled for statistical and research purposes.

PROCEDURE USED

Forty-eight public schools were contacted via a questionnaire and a letter of explanation describing the intent. The questionnaire also requested that the recipients dispatch other relevant information and materials which might explain their organization and philosophy.

The returned questionnaires were analyzed, the responses were tabulated, and all other relevant data were evaluated. The results were presented and interpreted to reveal the criteria used in grouping pupils in nongraded elementary schools.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROBLEM

Chapter two reviews the literature which demonstrates the changes in education in the United States from the Colonial period to the present. The philosophy inherent in the nongraded type of organization is discussed in relation to the philosophies set forth in earlier times and as applied in selected situations today.

Chapter three describes the study procedure including the selection and extent of the sample, the questionnaire items, and the organization of the raw data.

Chapter four is an analysis of the results of the questionnaire. The criteria or bases used for grouping will be discussed here.

Chapter five is a summary with conclusions and recommendations based upon the questionnaire findings.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As in any important organization, a modification of the school structure and a change in goals sometimes is needed that they may comply more closely with the educational philosophy. Without change, progress may be stymied.

Since individual progress is the basis for our national progress, it is then most important that changes and modifications be made to allow such progress. This chapter provides a general and informative overview of the development of grouping practices in American education. The overview will begin with the period of colonization of the United States and will end with a review of current literature on the nongraded school organization and philosophy.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE GRADED PATTERN

Cubberley[1] relates that the Pilgrims brought with them to Plymouth the concept that education was important, especially from the religious point of view. Inherent in this was the idea that everyone be taught from early childhood to read and understand the Bible. The need of the student, then, was to read and write. The educational goal was the application of these skills--the two R's--toward understanding the Bible and, ultimately, their religion. Cubberley contended

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[1] Ellwood P. Cubberley, Readings in Public Education in the United States. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934, p. 11.

that the philosophy of education, set forth by the Pilgrims, was that of assuring each child a good religious background.

Cubberley[1] maintained that the schools of the early 1700's still carried a religious purpose as a central part of their philosophy. The Latin Grammar School, a new system brought over from Europe in 1635, was instituted with the sole purpose of offering a strictly classical curriculum in order to prepare boys for the colonial college course. However, the people in the Middle Colonies found it to be unsatisfactory as a preparation for business pursuits and replaced it with the English Grammar School offering a more practical type of curriculum.

In 1799 Jefferson[2] submitted, for the state of Virginia, a bill "For the more general diffusion of knowledge" through the organization of a complete state system of schools. The plan was not approved, but, between 1776-1800, all of the original states except Connecticut and Rhode Island framed constitutions which included provisions for free education throughout their states.

The academy, an educational innovation in 1751, set forth the goal of "providing suitable training for those students who, by natural ability and by choice, were headed for law, medicine, or the ministry."[3] Anyone with ambition could become trained for these professions, whereas, before the academy arrived, only the sons of wealthy

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[1] Ibid., p. 82-83.

[2] Ibid., p. 106.

[3] Ibid., p. 126.

people had had this opportunity. According to Cubberley, the academy was a "crusader" in that it prepared the public for universal education by allowing any ambitious young man the opportunity to become a lawyer, doctor, or minister.

The academy furnished most of the leaders for our country during the late 1700's. This helped "sell" education to the American public, thereby smoothing the way for a free public school program for all children.

With the rapid increase of school population, there was a need for more efficient means of education. Horace Mann[1], leader in elementary school organization in the early 1800's, visited the schools of a number of European countries in 1843. He related what he saw in Prussia and recommended that the Boston Board of Education adopt the Prussian plan for classification of students. This plan provided for segregation of children into groups according to chronological age and according to attainment of subject matter. A single teacher took charge of a single age-level, each level of which was called a grade.

The Quincy Grammar School opened in 1848[2] with this graded form of vertical organization. People of that time predicted that the graded organization would be the pattern for fifty years to come. The mode, however, has remained the same for the majority of our country's schools despite the fact that it was found to limit the environmental

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[1] Ibid., p. 287.

[2] Ibid., p. 287.

variable which greatly affects learning. Some graded schools, of ocurse, have made horizontal innovations which widen the experiences, but vertical progress is still impeded.

THE QUESTIONING OF THE GRADED STRUCTURE

Criticisms of the graded type of school organization took place soon after it had begun. The second superintendent of the Quincy School was F. W. Parker.[1] Parker had also visited the schools of Europe, but came back with less enthusiasm for their organizational plan than Horace Mann had had. Parker felt this type of organization was fine in Europe where classes of people existed in the society. He felt classification of pupils was not as difficult in Europe because only those who had the potential studied academic subjects. However, America was a democracy and class distinction was non-existent here, he argued. Thus Parker concluded, our schools, which also follow a democratic philosophy, could not adequately carry out a graded pattern of organization.

Parker's pet phrase was "The ideal school is the ideal community."[2] As the superintendent of the Quincy schools, he emphasized education for democracy and cooperation between school and home. As a result of his efforts, the local elementary curriculum was greatly enriched.

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[1] H. G. Good, A History of Western Education. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947, pp. 476-482.

[2] Ibid., p. 478.

Parker, following Pestalozzian theory,[1] felt that the development of the child was the guiding principle of education. The Quincy schools were not able, however, to follow this guiding principle, for child development and the variables affecting the concept were not documented sufficiently at that time. Teachers were not taught these basic concepts in human learning and consequently could not meet this goal.

The activity type of curriculum became "Quincy Busy Work" and other schools, in order to avoid falling into this pattern, reverted to less activity and more book learning. As a result, the organization and curriculum became more rigid. Child development was less important than the subject matter.

Criticism of this rigid organization, or lock-step began almost immediately. In 1868 W. T. Harris[2] felt that a plan of frequent promotion and reclassification would ease some of the harshness of the lock-step. Under his plan, re-grouping took place at six-week intervals for those individuals who showed marked gain in particular skills. Harris's philosophy "stressed the importance of society as a whole and the relatively lesser importance of the individual."[3] At any rate, he made an attempt to break the "lock-step" method and provided continuous progress for some students.

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[1] Ibid., p. 479.

[2] Ellwood P. Cubberley, Readings in Public Education in the United States. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943, pp. 391-392.

[3] Ibid., p. 392.

Harris[1] felt that the function of education was to bring the pupil to understand his relationship to the race. The course of study was important because the child could in this way learn of the heritage of the race. Some who believed that the course of study was important from this viewpoint did not feel all youngsters should be held to the same rate of progress because many were failing. It was felt by some leaders in education at that time that such failure caused other set-backs for the individual. These leaders decided that there must be a way to provide for the difference in rate of learning.

OTHER INDIVIDUALIZING SCHEMES

Other schemes were employed at about this time to "vary the rate of the pupil's progress, to vary the total amount and kind of work, and to aid weak pupils to overcome difficulties which they could not master alone."[2] Willis Search developed this plan in 1888 at Pueblo, Colorado. It utilized all three of the afore-mentioned ideas, for each pupil worked at his own rate as far as he was able in each subject-matter area. The teacher helped the pupils with the difficulties and gave suggestions where needed.

Search's ideas spread and were applied with local variations by Washburne in his Winnetka Program, Parkhurst in her Dalton Plan,

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[1] Ibid., p. 390.

[2] H. G. Good, A History of Western Education. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 481.

and Wirt in the Gary Plan.[1] These plans all included the Parker doctrine that the child is sent to school to learn to live as well as to acquire knowledge. Education should then be living, not a preparation for life only. The teacher is the leader of the classroom community and, in this role, should live for others as well as for himself. This doctrine of education was accepted only after the economic and social conditions were changed.

THE CHANGING PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the early 1800's favored a belief in individualism and competition. This was caused by the economic and geographic conditions existing at that time. "Population was sparse, land was abundant, natural resources were unappropriated, and new continents were still to be conquered."[2] However, personal success was not a lone or private thing, for it unintentionally contributed to social welfare and progress. Anyone who became educated was not only a success in himself, but was automatically performing a service to society. Educational preparation brought rewards to self and to society alike.

With the continuing changes in economic and industrial conditions, training for individual success lost much of its social significance whereas, previously, individual success was concomitant

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[1] Ibid., p. 482.

[2] Elmer Harrison Wilds, The Foundations of Modern Education. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1942, p. 549.

with social progress. Education, with its purpose of training individuals to play a lone hand in a competitive struggle, was not adequate, for man had become dependent on his fellow man. Competition in society was not on an individual basis, and interdependence, according to Wilds, was increasing. The solitary individual could accomplish little which would truly benefit all of society. Wilds[1] stated in 1942, that "most educators today consider the ultimate aim of education as socialistic rather than individualistic" and that the present-day conception of education with its social goal has given the school a new importance as a social institution. Society must contribute to the support of public schools so that education can produce well-adjusted individuals.

Dewey[2], one of the leading advocates of a social philosophy of education, established his "Laboratory School" in 1896 to put to test these theories of socializing education. This, more than anything else, gave impetus to the new movement. Dewey's school was what Parker felt all schools should be--"an embryo active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society."[3] The individual who has been educated in such a setting can bear his share and can be of service to society.

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[1] Ibid., p. 548.

[2] H. G. Good, A History of Western Education. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947, p. 482.

[3] Ibid., p. 562.

Dewey's statement that "the school is not a preparation for life, but is life itself" and his idea, that the school curriculum must be made up of the activities of real social living, brought on the activity or project curriculum consisting of exercises and problems drawn from the fields of actual social conduct. Also inherent in this plan was the belief[1] that social guidance would be substituted for discipline as a method of establishing order and good behavior in the school.

Dewey's new school included many of the concepts now associated with aspects of nongradedness. The chief of these were the ideas of Froebel and Parker[2] that:

> the school should be a community and that learning should be an active and cooperative process involving investigation, construction, and artistic creation; and these were supported by the biological and functional psychology of James, Angel, and Dewey himself, by the manual training and nature study movements, each of which underwent important changes at Dewey's hands, and finally by the effort to relate the school to the outside community.

Actually Parker laid the groundwork for progressive education for which John Dewey provided the philosophical justification.

The objectives of the school can then be found in the needs of society. The curriculum should be based upon materials to be studied which will aid in attainment of those goals set forth in satisfying

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[1]Elmer Harrison Wilds, The Foundations of Modern Education. New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1942, p. 587.

[2]H. G. Good, A History of Western Education. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947, pp. 485-486.

the needs of society. This new philosophy, with the new psychology of dealing with youth, generated a major effort to organize the curriculum of the school "around childhood needs and interests rather than upon adult demands and prescription."[1]

NEW PLANS ARE BORN

The child-centered school idea brought forth many administrative plans. The most significant were the Platoon, Dalton, and Winnetka Plans which were mentioned on page fifteen. Description of these plans follows.

The Platoon Plan.

The Platoon School, begun by Superintendent Wirt of Gary, Indiana, was launched in 1908. Wirt's goal was "to give the children an all-round education."[2] He equipped his schools with adequate playgrounds, music and art studios, shops, swimming pools, science laboratories, gardens, and other special facilities. There were two groups or platoons made up of all the students. These two groups took turns using the facilities. While one group worked on basic skills, the second group used special rooms for activities. All of the school facilities at Gary were used during the entire school day. Multiple-use and balanced load were the principles applied. The

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[1] William E. Drake, The American School in Transition. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955, p. 457.

[2] Ibid., pp. 457-458.

platoon plan was designed to get the greatest use from a school building, to provide pupils instruction by teachers with special skills in subjects such as music, and, thereby, to balance the amount of academic and social activity. The program was child-centered in that experiences in all areas of subject-matter utilized individual as well as group action in learning.

The Winnetka Plan.

Carleton Washburne[1] continued Wirt's idea of individual as well as group activities in 1919 when he began the Winnetka Plan. Children were evaluated to determine their level of abilities in the various areas and then they were assigned to activities which they could successfully master. Half of the morning and half of the afternoon sessions were spent in individual work while the remaining portion of the morning and afternoon was devoted to group activities.

The procedure used consisted of assignment of a unit in each subject to each individual. The student completed the unit at his own rate with only as much assistance from instructors as was needed. A test covering the work of the unit was then given, and having obtained a satisfactory score, the child proceeded to the next unit. The instructors set up the goals according to the child's ability and needs.

The remaining periods were spent in group work consisting of social activities, i.e. drama, games, assemblies, and various kinds of creative work. Here the individual pupil learned to cooperate and to

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[1] Ibid., p. 457.

interact with his peers in preparation for later life in his community.

The Dalton Plan.

The Dalton Plan, an outgrowth of the work of Helen Parkhurst, allowed for socialization at first, but this aspect of the program was later dropped. Miss Parkhurst believed that children should be permitted to concentrate on their work over longer periods of time. The plan included a laboratory where "pupils had free access to a large variety of materials, a conference contract which made possible a high degree of individual effort, and group activities supplementing the individual efforts."[1]

The Dalton Plan was referred to as a contract plan in that pupils agreed to complete the assignments set forth in their meeting with instructors during the first fifteen to thirty minutes of the morning session. These assignments lead to completion of a unit, eight to ten of which were to be completed during the school year. No one was allowed to cover more than that amount in any one subject, but all were encouraged rather to complete the subject matter for all areas. Two or three hours were spent in subject-matter laboratories containing materials, charts and books for the assignments which covered the amount of work to be accomplished in one school month. Upon completion of a unit, mastery tests were given to determine whether reinforcement might be needed. Creative and athletic activities took

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[1] Ibid., p. 457.

place in the afternoon, but were dropped later because more time was needed in the academic subjects. This program[1] required that all children have command of the skill subjects before they were permitted to work under the contract plan; thus it was not used below the fourth-grade level.

All of these plans had some merit,[2] but none was a panacea and not one lived up to all of the claims of its sponsors. Perhaps part of their effort represented attempts to break down the graded structure in order that individual differences might be recognized and considered.

Faith in democracy created the American pattern of education. As Parker stated, democracy does not accept the principle of fixed social classes, for this is a contradiction of its principles. Good's study[3] proved that there is great ability, ranging from high talent to genius, in all classes.

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN NONGRADED SCHOOL

Leonard B. Wheat[4] wrote, in 1937: "More and more educators are rebelling against the type of schooling which tries to fit the child

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[1]Gerald A. Yoakam and Robert G. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950, pp. 340-341.

[2]H. G. Good, A History of Western Education. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1947, p. 482.

[3]Ibid., p. 534.

[4]Leonard B. Wheat, "The Flexible Progress Group System," Elementary School Journal, 38:175-183, November, 1937.

to the school pattern rather than fit the school to the child." Perhaps educators were trying to get away from the traditional system in which all pupils are treated alike and are consequently promoted or failed every year.

In the autumn of 1937, Western Springs, Illinois, under the direction of Superintendent Wheat made a move to combat the evils of nonpromotion. This move was designated the "flexible progress group system." It abolished the repeating and the skipping of grades but allowed pupils vertical progress as well as horizontal enrichment.

Classification and promotion of youngsters was based largely on reading achievement in the primary level. Western Springs did away with the first three grades and set up a levels program in reading. The bases used in grouping consisted of reading age rank[1] and mental maturity.

Teachers were each given about thirty-five pupils who were separated into three or more groups for teaching purposes. Each group within a class was at a different level of achievement in reading skill attainment. There were then 24 levels--three levels within each of the eight classes instead of three grade levels with

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[1]Reading age is similar to the reading grade except that the norms are based on the child's age rather than on his grade position. Thus a reading age of 9-7 (nine years and seven months) means that the child's score is equal to the median score of children who are nine years and seven months old. Reading ages are expressed in years and twelfths. (Taken from Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability. New York: David McKary Co., Inc., 1961, p. 169.

two or three classes at each grade level. These levels were progressively more difficult and children were moved to the various levels in proportion to achievement.

Homogeneity, it was felt, would improve the learning and the teaching situation. Grouping and, then, re-grouping within classes according to reading ability, it was felt, would make for less widespread preparations by the teacher meeting the needs of the children in her class. This plan was practiced from 1937 to 1940 when it was abandoned and to which the school has not since returned.

The Milwaukee school system, in 1942, began a "continuous progress plan" which implemented a reading level plan similar to that of Western Springs. This plan is still being used in the 116 elementary schools of the Milwaukee system.

CURRENT LITERATURE ON THE NONGRADED MOVEMENT

Other schools have adopted similar plans which remove the grade barrier and permit continuous progress for all pupils. Identification of such schools is often difficult, for inaccurate and faulty data may result from questionnaires which are usually used for identification purposes. The larger systems are well-publicized, but there are many smaller schools which have not been identified and cited.

Goodlad and Anderson[1] suggest that, while it is "virtually impossible to describe the present picture with accuracy," the movement is gaining a foothold. These authors found, in 1957 to 1959,

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[1]John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, The Nongraded Elementary School. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963, p. 54.

that 18 per cent of the urban areas in the United States indicated some degree of involvement with nongraded primary units. Goodlad and Anderson claimed, in 1960, that there were as many as 500 such plans in existence. At the present time reports to the Office of Education[1] suggest a rapidly mounting trend toward nongradedness at the elementary school level.

Goodlad and Anderson[2] seeking, in 1960, to learn reasons for beginning nongraded schools, found 45 per cent of the reporting schools hoping for more attention to individual differences. Thirty-five per cent said they disliked the lockstep of grading with its nonpromotion policies, its interruption of progress for some pupils, and its lack of flexibility in pupil placement and grouping. Twelve per cent implied the possibility of effecting curriculum changes.

Hillson, Johnes, Moore, and Van Devender[3] found that the failure rate on a national basis was as high as eighteen per cent in 1962. The reason for nongrading, as reported to these men, was basically that of allowing for continuous progress at a rate appropriate to the ability of each individual child.

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[1]Stuart E. Dean, "Nongraded Schools." Education Briefs, Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

[2]John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, The Nongraded Elementary School. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, In., 1963, p. 207.

[3]Maurie Hillson and Others, "A Controlled Experiment Evaluating the Effects of a Nongraded Organization on Pupil Achievement", Journal of Educational Research, 57:548-550, July-August, 1964.

Hildred and Hillson[1] did further research on the failure aspect of graded schools. It was found that many educators felt that the failure to deal adequately with individual differences has led to reading problems, to academic retardation, to failure, and even to dropouts, juvenile delinquency, and emotional illness. They state, further, that the basic needs of children are: a sense of worth, a feeling of success in daily tasks, recognition for this success, acceptance, and love. Hildred and Hillson feel that the nongraded school provides better for all these factors than does the graded school.

Carbone's research[2] along this vein bore different findings. Comparisons were made of five selected mental health factors: a) freedom from emotional instability, b) freedom from feelings of inadequacy, c) freedom from nervous manifestations, d) personal relationships, and e) social participation. The graded school and the nongraded school comparisons yielded similar results on the first four factors, and, on the last factor, social participation, the graded school pupils were found to fare better.

Goodlad and Anderson state[3], however, that as far as pupil adjustment is concerned, the nongraded school pupils are happier and

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[1]Don M. Hildred and Maurie Hillson, "The Nongraded School and Mental Health", The Elementary School Journal, 63:219-223, Jan. 1963.

[2]Robert F. Carbone, "A Comparison of Graded and Nongraded Elementary Schools", The Elementary School Journal, 62:82-88, Nov. 1961.

[3]John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, "Self Appraisal in Nongraded Schools: A Survey of Findings and Perceptions", Elementary School Journal, 62:261-269, February 1962.

less of a discipline problem. Wherever statistical data permitted statements on the significance of the differences, a significant difference was rarely reported that was not in favor of the nongraded groups. The fact that the teachers in nongraded schools did not have to require that all students maintain the same rate brought peace of mind to the teachers and consequently to the pupils.

The belief that changing the school organizational structure alone will not produce high academic achievement or change instructional practices of teachers is common to all of these authorities. The philosophy of continuous progress at individual speeds is inherent in this organizational type and must be accepted by the instructors or the nongradedness will be in name only.

Perkins[1] reiterates these beliefs which teachers and administration ought to have, by stating that: 1) learning should be continuous, 2) children should have opportunity to achieve at their own rates, 3) the school program should meet individual needs, and 4) greater achievement will result when children experience success. He contends that parents and teachers should have an initial and continual orientation on the objectives and on the operation of the nongraded program.

Superintendent Peters,[2] at the Beverley Hills Unified School District, feels, as does Perkins, that education of the public and faculty is a never-ending process requiring cooperation and rapport if

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[1]Hugh Perkins, "Nongraded Programs: What Progress", Educational Leadership, 19:166-170, February, 1962.

[2]Kenneth L. Peters, "Achievement Levels Are a Comfortable Half Step to a Nongraded Plan", The Nation's Schools, 74:32-33, July, 1964.

success of the program is to come about. Progress is not only to be expected with pupils, but with the personnel and parents as well.

Since "the nongraded plan is a system of organization and nothing more",[1] reorganization of the school will not resolve any problems except those of organization. Nongraded organization is no panacea for problems of curriculum and instruction.

Until a teacher understands what nongrading will permit him to do, he will teach no differently than he ever did. If the realization is there, however, "the door is open for more creative teaching in line with pupil realities."[2]

Perkins[3] lists these advantages of nongrading:

1. Fewer children are retained.
2. Learning is greater and continuous.
3. Needs are fulfilled via flexible grouping.
4. Pressures of achievement and maintaining standards are reduced.
5. Teacher-parent rapport is improved.
6. Slower children are identified earlier.
7. Teacher-pupil morale is higher.
8. Teamwork among teachers is increased.
9. Flexibility allows for team teaching so a teacher can have the same children for more than one year (cycling).

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[1] John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, The Nongraded Elementary School. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963, p. 59.

[2] Ibid., p. 59.

[3] Hugh Perkins, "Nongraded Programs: What Progress", Educational Leadership, 19:166-170, December 1961.

Hillson, Johnes, Moore, and Van Devender[1] summarize the advantages in this manner:

1. Achievement is improved.
2. Tensions and anxieties are reduced for students and teachers.
3. Instruction can be adjusted to individual lags and spurts.
4. Students compete against their own records, not others'.
5. Worry about encroaching on the next grade's subjects is eliminated.
6. There is no requirement that all children be brought up to the same level of achievement.
7. If absent, students can resume where they left off.
8. Some say achievement is increased in all levels.

DiLorenzo and Salter[2] maintain that the nongraded unit is based on the assumption that the school program should be flexible for the purpose of meeting the varying developmental needs and growth patterns of individual children, thus allowing pupils to have the opportunity to achieve at their own rates. These authors contend that learning should be continuous, that greater achievement results when children experience success in school, and that larger blocks of time for maturation and development will improve pupils' personal-social adjustment. The nongraded unit usually replaces grades one, two, and three and less occassionally includes kindergarten. In some instances the intermediate years are also nongraded.

DiLorenzo and Salter describe the nongraded-primary system as one in which the curriculum is divided into levels which may vary from

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[1]Maurie Hillson and Others, "A Controlled Experiment Evaluating the Effects of a Nongraded Organization on Pupil Achievement", Journal of Educational Research, 57:548-550, July-August, 1964.

[2]Louis T. DiLorenzo and Ruth Salter, "Co-operative Research on the Nongraded Primary", Elementary School Journal, 65:270, February, 1965.

as many as seven to thirty-two. Levels, according to these authors, are mostly described in terms of reading achievement. A few systems have levels in arithmetic and spelling, but these are less common. Progress to a succeeding level depends on the learning or attainment of the skills in the particular level in which they are engaged at the moment. The time taken to attain the skills depends mainly upon the pupil's capacity. There is no penalty nor is there any stated time span. Each child works at his own rate and is transferred, if necessary, from one class to another.

DiLorenzo and Salter state that a slow child may take four years to cover the work the average child covers in three. The academically talented child may complete the work in less than the conventional three years. In some cases, nongrading is "merely a change in vocabulary which is not accompanied by any change in teaching practices, in what happens to the child in school or in what is expected of him."[1] The grade labels are eliminated in such cases, but the grade expectations remain. There is no more individualization of instruction than there was before the grade labels were removed.

Madeline Hunter[2] suggests that there are three dimensions which must be taken into account in order to provide for individual differences. The first and probably the most important, she feels, is teaching style. "Some teachers are successful with most children, no teacher is

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[1] Ibid., p. 272.

[2] Madeline Hunter, "The Dimensions of Nongrading", Elementary School Journal, 65:22, October, 1964.

successful with all."[1] The second factor or dimension which is important to all children is the peer group. Children must be placed with those who will stimulate them in a comfortable manner. The third factor is the educational program which can easily be adjusted to fit the individual child.

Hunter feels these three aspects can be utilized to the fullest if there are alternatives in teaching style, in peer group, and in educational program. If there is only one fifth-grade room for example, there are no alternatives. Hunter states that the three dimensions can be utilized fruitfully only when there is a sound educational diagnosis. We must ask of each child, in writing up observations, what teaching style is most effective in motivating him, how his peers see him, how he sees himself, and what his educational strengths and weaknesses are.

Hunter contends that, if a school is to be truly nongraded, its organizational scheme cannot use only one measure--"be it intelligence quotient, reading grade placement, total achievement, or any other one dimension--as a basis for creating class groups."[2] Grouping must take into consideration all three dimensions or nongrading will not be true.

Hunter maintains that "nongrading is an organizational plan that does not leave a child's placement to chance, but rather forces educational decision-making that takes three important considerations

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[1] Ibid., p. 22.

[2] Madeline Hunter, "The Dimensions of Nongrading", Elementary School Journal, 65:20-25, October, 1964.

into account: the teaching style that most successfully motivates, the peer group that most successfully stimulates, and the educational opportunities that most successfully advance the learning of each child."[1] Hunter feels that it is the function of the organizational plan to make the alternatives available and it is the teachers' and administrators' duty to diagnose the educational needs of the children in the light of the three dimensions stated above.

INHERENT CONCEPTS OF NONGRADEDNESS

The nongraded type of organization seeks to provide a flexible situation to permit adjustment of the program of learning to the individual pupil. This is not a new concept, for Parker[2] stated these objectives for his Quincy School in 1875. When he returned from his visit to the European schools, he felt more than ever that the graded type of organization was a hindrance to the meeting of these objectives. Continuous progress of pupils in school could only be assured if these objectives were fulfilled.

Continuous progress of pupils at individual rates can only come about when instructional methods coincide with the idea that plateaus must not exist. A good teacher recognizes that plateaus serve as a warning that all is not going well. Removal of detrimental factors causing the plateau must be made. At times, a change in teaching methods

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[1] Ibid., p. 22.

[2] Howard L. Kingsley and Ralph Garry, The Nature and Conditions of Learning. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1957, pp. 78-79.

or a new form of incentive for the learner will shift the individual forward into a progressive "gear". Since all children do not have the same capacity to learn in each subject-matter area, provisions must be made to reduce or increase the difficulty of their tasks.

In order that provisions for individual differences be made, the philosophy inherent in this plan must be fully accepted by the teachers. In his evaluation of the nongraded school and its philosophy, Stuart E. Dean[1] stated that the nongraded school is:

> in closer harmony with the desires and beliefs of teachers who have felt impeded and restricted by the mechanical unrealism of the graded school and by inhibitions of their efforts toward creative teaching.

SUMMARY

Throughout the history of American education there have been numerous conflicting theories concerning the function of the school. During the Colonial period there was a conflict between the theories of preparation for life in the hereafter and preparation for life in the everyday world. In the 1880's an individual's success brought success for all of society, but, with the changes in economic and industrial conditions, training for individual success lost its social significance. Most educators today consider the ultimate aim of education as socialistic rather than individualistic. Typically individualistic, the Academy was begun in 1751 with the goal of providing education for those who were headed for law, medicine, or

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[1]Stuart E. Dean, "Nongraded Schools", Education Briefs, Office of Education, Washington, D.C., p. 8.

the ministry. With the rapid increase of school population, there was need for more efficient means of education. Horace Mann, in relating what he saw in Prussia, convinced the Boston Board of Education that adoption of the Prussian plan of classification of students would make for efficiency and assurance of education for all. Children were segregated according to chronological age and placed in grades.

In 1868 W. T. Harris instituted a plan of frequent promotion and reclassification in the St. Louis schools. In 1888, Willis Search developed a plan which allowed pupils at Pueblo, Colorado to work at their own rates, go as far as they were able in each subject-matter area, and allowed teachers to help individual pupils with difficulties. Search's ideas were applied by Washburne in his Winnetka Program, Parkhurst in her Dalton Plan and Wirt in his Gary Plan. Students were sent to school to learn to live as well as to acquire knowledge. Prior to all of this, Dewey, one of the advocates of a social philosophy of education, felt that school is not a preparation for life, but is life itself. He opened his laboratory school in 1896 to put these theories to test. The Winnetka, Dalton, and Gary Plans continued Dewey's "life school" but utilized a part of the day for instruction via contract fulfillment and the remainder of the day in application of the learnings in activities.

It wasn't until 1934 that the first nongraded situation came into existence when Leonard B. Wheat, Superintendent of the Western Springs, Illinois schools, instituted a reading levels program in the

primary level. The Milwaukee Schools followed this pattern in 1942 by instituting a continuous progress program at the primary level.

The reasons for beginning a nongraded program were: a) it was hoped there would be improved attention to individual differences, b) it was felt that the lockstep of grading with its nonpromotion policies and interruption of progress for some pupils was detrimental, and c) some felt ungrading will allow for flexibility of pupil placement and grouping which is necessary for continuous progress.

Carbone's research revealed the fact that students in those graded schools which he contacted were found to have better social participation than students in the nongraded schools to which they were compared. On the other factors, to which these schools were compared, there was found to be no advantage in ungrading.

Goodlad and Anderson contend that pupil adjustment is better in nongraded schools, and wherever statistical data permitted statements on the significance of the differences, most of them favored the nongraded schools. Teachers were better adjusted as were the students because they did not have to require that all students maintain the same rates. These authors claim that the nongrading will be "in name only", if acceptance of the continuous progress philosophy on the part of the instructors is not gained.

Definite advantages in nongrading were given by Perkins and by Hillson, Johnes, Moore, and Van Devender in their research. Among these were: improved achievement, continuous learning, improved rapport, fulfillment of needs via flexible grouping, earlier identification

of the slower students, better adjustment of instruction to individual lags and spurts, and increased teamwork among teachers. DiLorenzo and Salter, in their description of the nongraded-primary system, stated that most schools have a reading levels approach and a few have levels in arithmetic and spelling.

Madeline Hunter suggested that there are three dimensions which must be taken into account in order to provide for individual differences: a) teaching style, b) peer group, and c) educational program. Hunter felt that grouping must take into consideration all three dimensions or nongrading will not be true.

The concept of continuous progress and varying rates must be accepted by the staff prior to institution of the plan or growth on the part of the student, and consequently society, may be stymied.

The theory of education now is one of individual growth for social growth. What we are is a result of the experiences we have had in the past. What we will become will be determined by the way we are conditioned to act, think and feel. Since the school is a major part of the individual's environment, it plays a significant role in conditioning his activity. The nongraded school allows for such growth in each individual.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The main problem of this research was to survey and report the various bases used by representative nongraded schools in grouping their students.

The question for which answers were sought was that of the criteria used to organize and divide the classrooms of pupils. As stated in Chapter II, the philosophy of continuous progress for all individuals at their own rates requires that criteria other than chronological age be used for classroom organization. The proponents of the nongraded school have long contended that they are more able to meet the individual needs of children than are the traditionally graded schools.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

An attempt was made to select representative schools from all over the country. Since no listing was available, schools were selected from citations in educational journals and books. The selected schools all happened to be public schools, but there are, no doubt, private and parochial schools which did not come to the attention of the writer.

Probably the most fruitful method of investigation of these nongraded schools would have been that of personal observation, but the expense and time involved did not permit such an examination. In lieu of this, a questionnaire was prepared and mailed to the selected

schools to obtain the information necessary for this study. The literature indicated that further research along this line was needed.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS INVOLVED

Forty-eight school districts were selected from the current literature. It was not known whether they used nongrading at the elementary, secondary, or at both levels. Because no listing was available, a beginning had to be made with the expectation that a significant number of the districts would have nongraded elementary schools. Of the forty-eight selected, thirty-one responded. Follow-up letters were not sent to the other 17 because the response from the thirty-one seemed adequate to indicate the trend. Doubt as to the existence of nongrading in the other seventeen influenced this decision as well.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was developed after research in educational journals and books revealed that certain kinds of information should be sought, especially in regard to the various bases employed by the non-graded schools for grouping their students. Most of the research disclosed information on schools which employed reading achievement as the criterion, but the present writer hypothesized that there might be nongraded schools in existence which utilize other criteria for grouping. Provision was made, not only for reading, but also for other aspects of the curriculum. A sample of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix A.

The questionnaire began with a request for descriptive data, such as the name of the school district, the number of students in the school system, and the number of full-time teachers employed (The extent of nongradedness could then be noted in relation to the school size.). These details gave the writer an idea as to the significance of each school's nongraded program. With some schools it could be noted that the picture contained only a small portion or element of nongradedness, whereas with others, the entire program and structure were imbedded with the nongraded philosophy and practice.

The next part of the questionnaire consisted of a check-list of bases which could be used in grouping and a blank space for any other criteria not on the check-list. The following titles, under the heading, "Developmental Level", were borrowed from Maurie Hillson[1] who has done a comparative study on the graded and nongraded system:

> Capacity. No one method is adequate for determining what ability is inherent in a child. "Teachers' judgments based on characteristics and classroom attainment need to be reinforced by group intelligence and achievement test results and all findings may be substantiated by an individual test."[2]

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[1]Maurie Hillson, "Some Considerations Concerning Pupil Progress, Transfer and Movement in a Reading Levels Based Nongraded Elementary School Organization", Journal of Educational Research, p. 4.

[2]William M. Cruickshank and G. Orville Johnson, Education of Exceptional Children and Youth. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hill, Inc., 1958, p. 159.

Maturity Factors. Children of any one chronological age vary to a great extent in physical maturity. Jersild[1] states that children, before adolescence, tend to grow at a fairly even rate, but the bodily changes are extremely variable when youngsters are compared with one another. A child who is rather mature physically, but who has achieved much less, probably would feel uncomfortable with children who are working at his level. Consideration of this factor is most important.

Social Adjustment. Adjustment to his peer group is most important for the child. Acceptance or rejection by the group will affect his work and attitudes. One of the systematic ways of obtaining information about the extent to which a child is accepted, ignored, or rejected by members of his group can be obtained through sociometric methods. There are other methods such as self-report, interview, self-rating, which may be employed to discover social adjustment, leadership or popularity.

Work Habits. Development of thoroughness, neatness and exactness in work at school varies as do the physical and mental abilities. A child who cannot persist in a task probably needs to have easier work and a sense of accomplishment before he will develop a habit of thoroughness, neatness, and exactness. Success in several such tasks at his own level will enable him to develop good work habits.

Listed along with the developmental level were reading levels and testing. The reading levels, described as steps or sequential divisions of skills, are to be achieved without a time limit. It was requested that an explanation be made for provisions for differences in achievement existing in other subject-matter areas, if the reading levels basis was checked.

Testing, the third basis listed, may be one of the greatest aids in making decisions. Maximum performance tests, such as intelligence tests, achievement tests, proficiency tests, or aptitude tests, may help show the child's ability. Typical performance tests may be of the behavior observation variety or the self-report type. Observation

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[1]Arthur T. Jersild, The Psychology of Adolescence. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1963, pp. 45-69.

may take place during a mental test, during a group discussion, or in a special task devised for this reason. The self-report type may be a questionnaire or a response scale using such words as "always, frequently, seldom, and never." If testing was checked by the respondents, it was requested that they list the names of and levels at which the tests were administered.

Response as to whether the groups or classes are homogeneous or heterogeneous in nature and whether subgrouping within the classes is done was requested. The method used in differentiating one room from another, other than by room number, was to be described, as was recognition of any consolidation of the various levels into blocks or units.

A statement was to be made as to the extent of the nongrading in the district, the length of time it had been in effect in the district, and determination as to whether there was a perceptible change toward or away from nongrading.

A request was made for information as to whether or not the kindergarten was included in the particular grouping plan and, if so, the age for entrance or the criteria for eligibility if age was not the determining factor.

Information as to who was responsible for the curriculum, the extent of teacher involvement in its development, and the use of teacher strengths with this type of organization was then requested. A space was allowed for listing of other schools in the area which were nongraded and enclosure of any pertinent literature was requested.

PROCESSING OF THE MATERIAL

The questionnaires were mailed with a letter of explanation describing the intent of the research. The thirty-one questionnaires which were returned were separated into five groups: a) those which had only some elements of nongrading; b) those which had been nongraded at one time, but had discontinued the practice; c) those which had never been nongraded; d) those which had a nongraded organization with bases other than reading levels for grouping their students.

The schools were examined for size of district, extent of nongradedness within the district, and the length of time that they had been nongraded. The bases were then investigated to determine any similarities and the remainder of the questions were treated in a like manner and recorded.

SUMMARY

The procedure used consisted of selection of a sample of nongraded schools from all over the country, as cited in the literature. Development of the questionnaire and a letter of explanation describing the intent of the research was the next step. Forty-eight questionnaires were mailed and thirty-one were returned; follow-up letters were not sent to the seventeen who did not respond because it was felt that a sufficient number had responded and there was a question as to whether the nonrespondents had nongraded programs. The questionnaires were then analyzed to determine any similarities in the bases used. The results will be discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

The variables which affect learning may be grouped under three headings: individual, task, and environmental. Since these variables are functioning within each individual simultaneously, and since the uncontrollable variables cause what we call individual differences, goals must be set forth to suit each individual's needs to carry out the philosophy of continuous progress. It is emphasized that such a philosophy is inherent in the nongraded organization. With the flexible environment ideally found in nongraded schools, the consideration of the task and individual variables becomes increasingly more important in the establishment of instructional groups. The questionnaire requested the bases currently being used for composition of the instructional groups. This chapter consists of: a) a description of these schools, b) an analysis of the bases described on pages 39, 40, and 41, and c) discussion of the other bases which some of the respondents added to the list.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDING SCHOOLS

The responding schools varied greatly in enrollment, size, and in the time they had been nongraded. Their enrollments ranged from 450 pupils to 70,482 pupils. Table one on page 44 shows the enrollment, number of teachers, and years spent in nongrading.

Table 1. LIST OF RESPONDING SCHOOLS

Name of School	Number of Pupils	Number of Teachers	Number of years Nongraded 1-2	3-5	5-10	Longer	Not Ungraded
Appleton, Wisconsin	6,000	225	-	-	-	1	-
Bay City, Michigan	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Corona, California	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Edmonds, Washington	13,951	450	-	-	-	1	-
Englewood, New Jersey	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Edina, Minnesota	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Glen Cove, New York	3,000	170	-	1	-	-	-
Green Bay, Wisconsin	6,350	225	-	-	-	1	-
Grosse Pointe, Michigan	740	34	-	-	1	-	-
Hermantown, Minnesota	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
International Falls, Minn.	2,000	72	-	-	-	1	-
Long Beach, New York	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mendota Hts., Minnesota	2,700	100	-	1	-	-	-
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	70,482	2131	-	-	-	1	-
Mineola, New York	2,400	118	-	1	-	-	-
Monterey, California	850	27	1	-	-	-	-
Nashville, Tennessee	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Newfield, New York	450	24	1	-	-	-	-
Norwalk, Connecticut	9,540	360	-	-	1	-	-
Port Washington, New York	3,400	180	-	-	1	-	-
Providence, R. I.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Racine, Wisconsin	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
River Forest, Illinois	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Sacramento, California	500	-	-	1	-	-	-
Shorewood, Wisconsin	600	120	1	-	-	-	-
Tarkio, Missouri	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Torrance, California	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Tulsa, Oklahoma	43,030.7	1262	-	-	1	-	-
University City, Mo.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Van Dyke, Michigan	4,210	174	-	-	-	1	-
Western Springs, Illinois	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Of the 31 responses, nineteen schools were designated as being nongraded, six had elements of nongrading, four were not ungraded at all (but were cited in the literature with respect to aspects related to nongradedness), and two had discontinued the practice of nongrading. Selected comments by those respondents may be found in Appendix B.

Four of the schools had been ungraded from one to two years, four had been ungraded from three to five years, six had been ungraded from five to ten years, and six had been ungraded for more than 10 years. Table 1 on page 44 specifies the number of years spent in nongrading.

Fourteen of the schools have ungraded the primary and intermediate levels and the other five have only the primary blocks ungraded. Eight of these primary blocks include kindergarten as part of the ungraded program.

In six of the eight schools, which included kindergarten in their primary blocks, youngsters were required to be five years old usually before September or before October first. One of the remaining two schools used Gesell's Test of Developmental Behavior, and the other school used the pooled judgments of the Director of Instruction, principal, and teacher in charge to determine whether the child should be admitted to the kindergarten program.

The most common method used in differentiating one room from another was by use of the teacher's name and either primary or intermediate immediately after the name.

All of the schools encouraged the teachers to participate in molding the curriculum to fit the needs of the pupils and all but

three had curriculum directors or coordinators who lead curriculum revisions. The remaining three had curriculum workshops or staff meetings for this purpose.

All of the schools claimed a perceptible spread in nongradedness and many listed other schools within their area which are or soon will be nongraded. A list of these schools may be found in Appendix C.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE BASES

There are various ways of grouping children in nongraded schools, for situations vary as do the children themselves. With the shattering of grademindedness comes the freedom to choose the basis for grouping which will best suit those involved. Since most schools use the reading achievement levels approach, these will be discussed first with the developmental level, testing, and other bases following in that order.

Levels of Achievement.

Eighteen of the 19 nongraded schools which responded used reading-achievement levels as a basis for grouping. Six of the schools had mathematics levels as well, and, of these six, one had spelling levels and another had language levels. The remaining schools did not have levels for any area other than reading.

Some of the schools which are using a reading levels approach sent brochures and guides explaining the organization of groups. The following are a resume of their plans.

The Van Dyke, Michigan Schools. "The Van Dyke Level System is not a method of teaching, but is an administrative tool used in the reading situation to insure sequential growth paced to individual needs."[1] A child's progress is assessed after short periods of growth for the purpose of determining whether reinforcement of learning is needed. Figure I, on page 48, illustrates the structure of their primary levels system in reading. If a child successfully completes the Junior Primary, which is a period of readiness, he is promoted to Level Two, but, if the readiness period is not completed, the child is moved to Level One where more readiness is given.

Mastery of skills taught at each Even Level allows for movement to the next Even Level, but, if weaknesses occur in any step, the child moves to an Odd Numbered Level where he is given the opportunity to overcome his weaknesses. Materials there are new, interesting, and of the level of difficulty with which the child is ready to cope. It is felt that the child does not have a sense of failure that often comes with having to repeat materials which at one time frustrated him.

When the child has mastered the skills in the Odd Level reinforcement step, he moves along to the next Even Level. Upon successful completion of all of the levels through Level 14, the child will have acquired the necessary skills and tools for continued success in school. Promotion to the fourth grade follows where the system reverts to the traditional organizational structure. There are no levels above what

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[1]Taken from "Stepping Along", a booklet by the Van Dyke Public Schools.

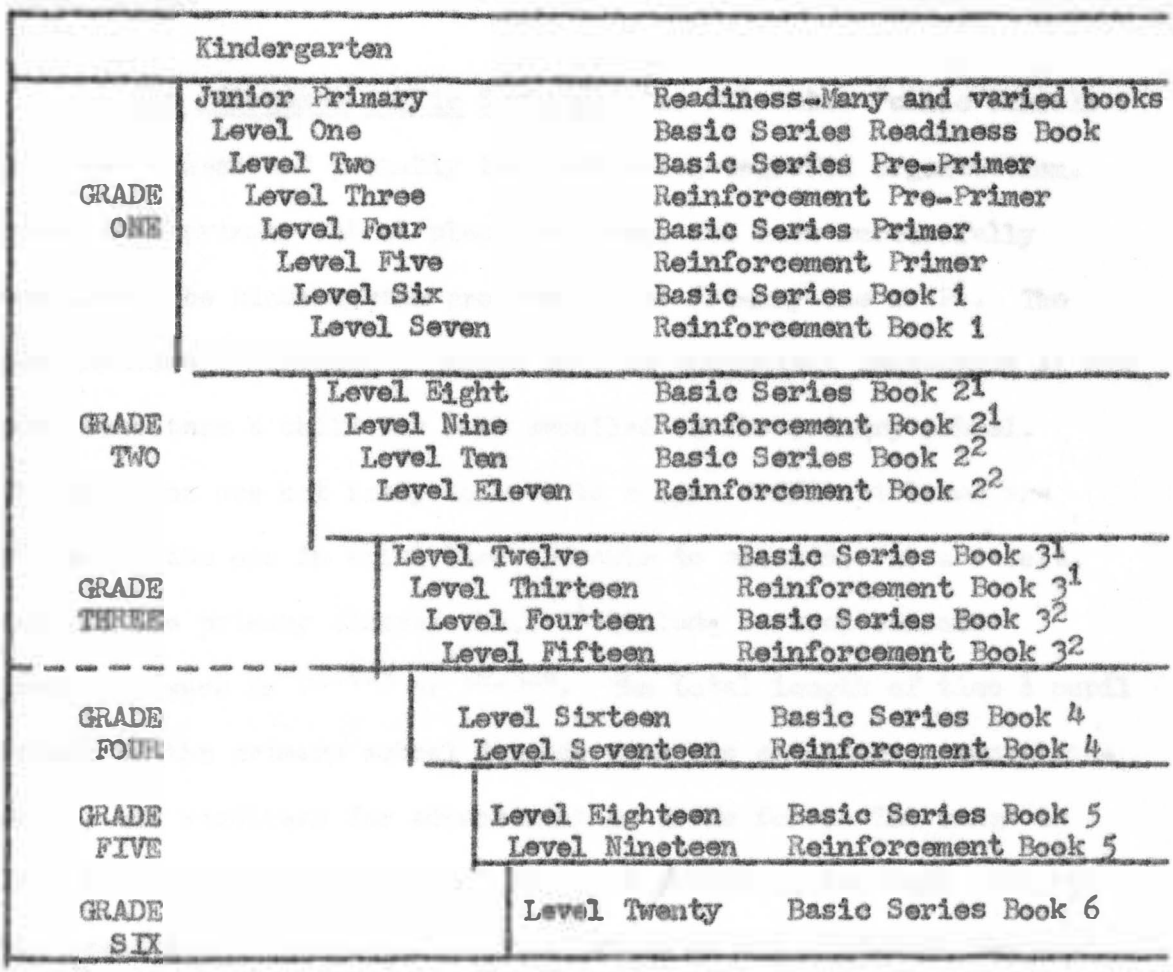

Figure I. Correlation Between Grades and Levels in Reading in the Van Dyke Levels System

Taken from the Van Dyke Brochure on The Nongraded Plan

we traditionally call the third grade. Progress is continuous in the primary levels, and children move along the vertical line at their own rates through the equivalent of the traditional first three grades.

The Milwaukee Public Schools. The Milwaukee Public Schools have the oldest and probably the best known ungraded organization. Under this primary school plan, children, who have successfully completed the kindergarten program, enter Primary One or P^1. The designations P^1 through P^8 serve only as convenient indicators of how many semesters a child has been enrolled in the primary school. Children who are not ready to move to a more difficult level are placed in the one in which they are able to succeed. As a result, most of the primary classes above P^1 include several semester groupings such as P^{3-4-5} or P^{2-3-4}. The total length of time a pupil spends in the primary school depends upon his abilities, accomplishments, and readiness for advancement to grade four. The range is from four to eight semesters. For most children, the work requires six semesters. The twelve reading levels in the Milwaukee Schools' Primary Program[1] are:

1. Pre-reading
2. Chart reading
3. Pre-primer
4. Easy primer
5. Hard primer
6. Easy first reader
7. Hard first reader
8. Easy second reader
9. Hard second reader
10. Easy third reader
11. Hard third reader
12. Transitional reader

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[1]Taken from "The Primary School: A Handbook for Parents," Milwaukee Schools.

Whenever administration of classes within a building permits, a teacher keeps the beginning group for a school year (regardless of levels attained), but, thereafter, the groups may vary. It sometimes is necessary to move children to other classes for social and academic reasons. Teachers therefore find themselves with several semester groupings, such as P3-4-5. This practice tends to keep both teacher and children in comfortable working groups.

An attempt is made to organize somewhat homogeneous age groupings by including children no more than one year younger or one year older than the median age of each room. A three-year chronological spread is thereby derived. Teachers work together to place every child where he will work and grow easily, comfortably, and successfully. Teachers also cooperate in organizing reading materials for the purpose of enabling all to know what books are available by selecting and purchasing books suited to the interests and needs of the children.

The Mineola, New York Schools. Mineola, New York features reading and mathematics levels in the primary block; reading levels only determine the intermediate block. Special guides, prepared by the teachers and directors, have been devised. These guides contain: a) lists of the various skills as found in guides of basal readers; b) lists of textbooks to be used; and c) designation of special learnings which need to be taught at the various levels.

Figure II, on page 51, illustrates the point of achievement for a typical group of fifty-one first year students in the primary block.

NOTE TO PARENTS:

This chart illustrates the point of achievement for fifty-one primary first year students. (two classes) During the conference the teacher will graphically show the reading level achieved by your child. The teacher will also indicate the child's progress in relationship to other primary children. For example: Johnny may be among the twenty pupils achieving at level 3. He is therefore achieving higher than eight pupils. However, twenty-three pupils are achieving higher than he.

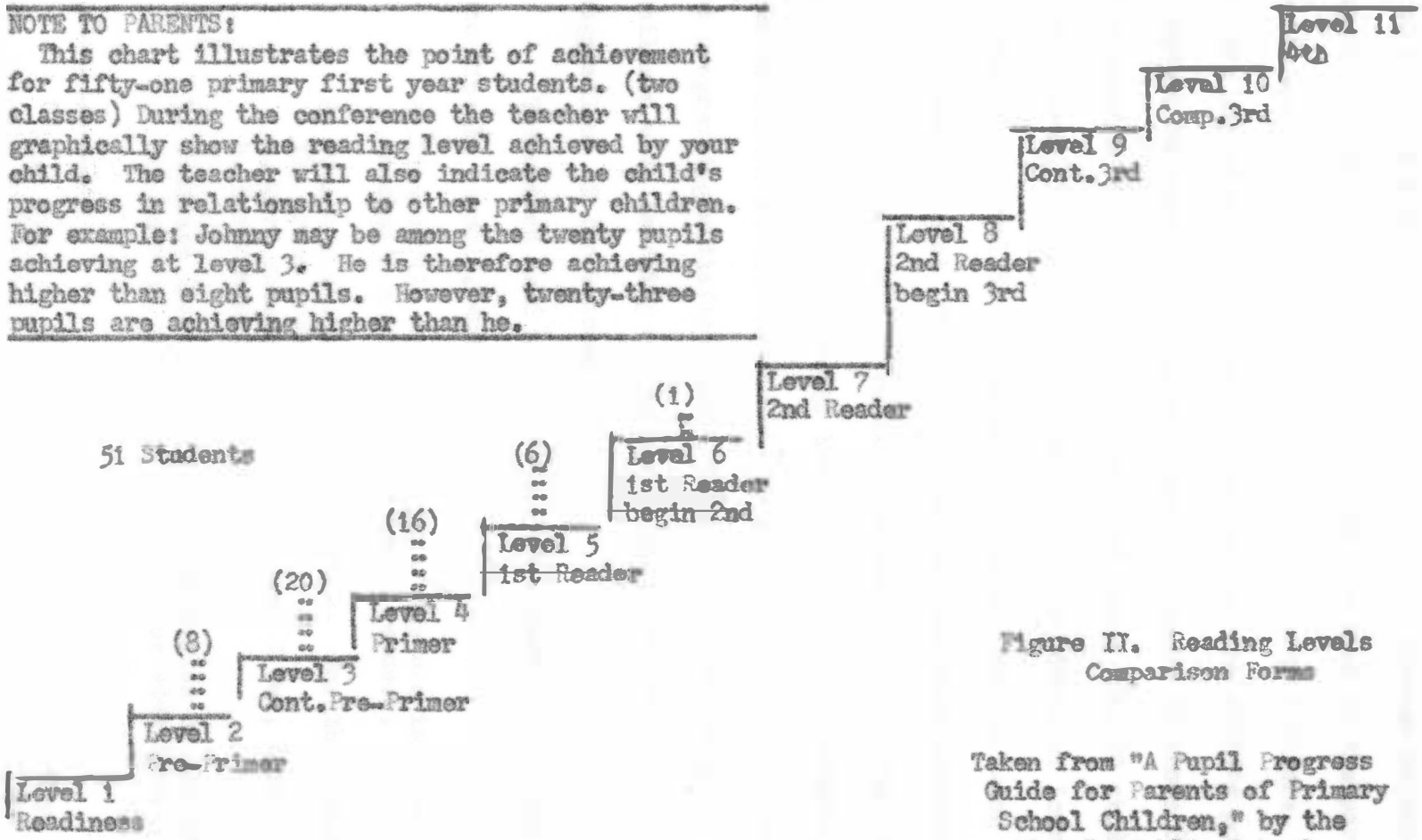

Figure II. Reading Levels Comparison Forms

Taken from "A Pupil Progress Guide for Parents of Primary School Children," by the Mineola Public Schools

The group of fifty-one was divided into two classes of approximately equal number. Report cards, issued at the time of the parent-teacher conferences conducted four times annually, have a figure, similar to Figure II, on which the teacher designates each child's point of progress in relation to his peer group. Figure II shows 8 students of the class of fifty-one are achieving at Level Two, 20 students at Level Three, 16 students at Level Four, 6 students at Level Five, and 1 student at Level Six. For example: Johnny may be among the twenty pupils achieving at Level Three. He has therefore achieved more than 8 pupils and less than 23 pupils. Teachers, in pointing out the child's level, explain to the parents that it is entirely possible for children to remain at the same level for four or five months and yet to be progressing satisfactorily. Parents are encouraged to help their children with learning of the basic skills at home by following the suggestions of the teacher.

The method used in arriving at the levels lists was given by the Mineola Schools, and follows:[1]

1. List skills in the order that they are introduced in the teacher's manuals of your basal readers.

2. Separate skills into broad areas. For this skeletal list the areas are:
   a. Word recognition (Harper, Row, & Co., lists 29 divisions)
   b. Comprehension skills

3. Evaluate these lists at the conclusion of the school year and make any necessary revisions or additions

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[1]Taken from "Reading Levels Guide for the Primary Program," by the Mineola Public Schools, District No. 10, Mineola, New York.

The Minoola schools have compiled a booklet of nongraded reading materials for the primary and intermediate blocks to aid teachers in the selection of appropriate reading materials for an individual child or a group of children. Correlated film strips and tests for diagnostic purposes are included in those series for which they are available.

The International Falls, Minnesota Schools. The International Falls, Minnesota Schools use eight reading levels which are organized as follows:[1]

1. Pre-reading Level. This is a period of preparation for reading. Pupils are given training and experiences that stimulate interest in reading and prepare them to learn to read with reasonable ease. This level is omitted for some (except for kindergarten experiences) and varies in length depending on the maturity and readiness of each child.

2. Pre-primer Level. This is the initial stage of reading. Pupils develop an increased interest in reading, acquire a considerable sight vocabulary, and are introduced to initial phonetic skills.

3. Primer Level. Instruction during this period aims to develop ability to read simple materials orally or silently with reasonable fluency. The pupil's sight vocabulary is greatly increased and phonetic and other word recognition skills are expanded.

4. First Reader Level. Pupils should develop rapidly in attention, understanding of content and interest in free and independent reading. They should be able to recognize a wide range of words and be competent in using all simple types of words analysis.

5. Easy Second-Reader Level. Pupils should make rapid progress in the basic attitudes and habits common to both oral and silent reading. They should be competent in all of the simple phonetic analysis skills and have a good command of the use of structural analysis.

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[1] Taken from the International Falls brochure, "A Nongraded Primary Unit."

6. Harder Second-reader Level. Pupils should progress in ease and fluency of reading, in application of content to simple problem situations, and in the use of most types of word analysis in the independent recognition of words.

7. Easy Third-reader Level. Pupils develop increased ability to read effectively for different purposes; increase their attention span and speed of silent reading; and improve and refine their word perception skills.

8. Harder Third-reader Level. At the end of this period the pupils must have mastered the minimum skills required for successful reading of content and problem materials at the intermediate level.

Pupils progress at their own speed through the eight levels comprising the primary unit. Most pupils complete the work of the primary unit in three years but some may take four, or in a few cases, five years. Completion of the primary unit in less than three years is not allowed. However, subject acceleration is used in reading and mathematics to allow pupils to advance as far as they are able in these fields. Enrichment is used to challenge pupils in the content areas.

The University City, Missouri Schools. The University City schools employ a reading levels plan based on the skills found in the teachers' guides of the Scott Foresman series readers. Eight levels have evolved from the readiness material through the 3^2 (third grade, second level reader). Scott Foresman book 2^1 defines the fifth reading level; 2^2 defines the sixth reading level; 3^1 defines the seventh reading level; and 3^2 defines the eighth reading level. The first four reading levels are defined by the books and skills traditionally thought of and used in first grade rooms.

Children who show unusually high achievement and potential in reading, and who score at the top level on the Scott Foresman Basic

Reading Tests, may use basic reading textbooks designated for use above their present grade level. Horizontal enrichment, via reading of materials at the independent reading level, is provided prior to the vertical advancement into higher level readers. The goal of the University City schools is "to mold each learning situation to each child, not to mold children into a learning situation."[1]

The Green Bay Schools. The Green Bay Schools use a reading levels program patterned after that of the Milwaukee schools. There are twelve steps, each teacher having three levels within her room. Children are shifted from one level to another within or between classrooms as needed. As with the University City schools, gifted children are given enrichment or taken into the next level of reading upon recommendation and evaluation by the teacher and principal. Students who do not achieve all twelve levels of the primary school in four years are given individualized instruction in special classes. Any student absent for a long period is placed in the situation where he will be given the help needed, for shifting of children is easily accomplished.

The Green Bay Nongraded Primary School is based upon the following beliefs:[2]

1. That children differ in their rate of growth and development.
2. That there should be continuous progress for each child without omitting or repeating of any part of the primary program.

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[1] Taken from "The Primary Unit," a brochure prepared by the University City Schools.

[2] Taken from "The Nongraded Primary School" by the Green Bay Schools.

3. That children should be permitted to develop at their own rate of learning.
4. That no child should be called upon to learn that which is beyond his capabilities.
5. That no child should have to wait for slower or less mature children.
6. That a pupil whose achievement equals his ability has made satisfactory progress.
7. That children do not learn to feel able by repeating experience of failure.
8. That good work habits are promoted by successful effort and achievement in challenging tasks within the range of individual abilities.
9. That a feeling of success at primary levels gives a child a wholesome attitude toward his entire school life.
10. That children should be taught at the level at which they are, regardless of age or length of time that has been spent in school.

Teachers, in the Green Bay schools, were dissatisfied with making promotion decisions regarding slow starters who were moving along nicely toward the end of the year, but who were not yet up to "grade standard." With the idea in mind that each child should be taught at the level "where he is" rather than be required to repeat, the Green Bay schools changed to the nongraded pattern. A pilot program with two of the schools began in 1950, and spread itself to one school after another, until all 14 elementary schools were nongraded in 1958.

Coffee County, Georgia. For the purpose of setting up the administrative machinery so that each child can progress at his own rate, the work usually covered in the first six grades is taught in Coffee County in nongraded classes differentiated by reading levels. Individual progress records aid in assignment of each child to the best situation possible. Nongraded classes in Coffee County are divided into two blocks--Primary and Intermediate. After completion of the Primary Block

a child is promoted to the Intermediate Block. Usually each block requires three years, but some children need four years at one or both levels. Occasionally a child completes one of the blocks in two years.

Of the schools employing reading levels, eleven stated that their groups were homogeneous with subgrouping within the classrooms. The remaining seven stated that their classes were heterogenous with subgrouping within the classes for purposes of making homogeneous groups to facilitate teaching and learning. Assignment to levels usually results in narrowing the range or spread within any nongraded classroom, but further subgrouping is necessary at the primary level.

Developmental Level.

The development of a child may be the prime factor or one of the factors included in making decisions as to where the youngster should be placed. The respondents were able to check or add to the following categories: a) capacity, b) maturity factors, c) social adjustment, d) work habits, or e) other factors.

Fifteen of the respondents checked capacity, sixteen checked maturity factors, fourteen checked social adjustment, and eleven checked work habits. Other factors were: "boy-girl balance" and "learning rate and achievement versus sequential norms."

One school employed a placement teacher, who, after meeting and observing the new youngsters for several days, decided where they ought to be placed. All respondents checked some or all of the factors.

Testing

Twelve of the schools use achievement tests, such as the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, and The California Achievement Tests. One school responded with a statement that no achievement tests published to date are appropriate for nongraded schools because the tests are translated into grade equivalents or norms, one of the evils to be eliminated by the nongraded plan.

Eighteen of the schools use group intelligence tests such as the Otis, California Mental Maturity, Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test, Lorge-Thorndike, Kuhlman-Anderson Group Test, and the SRA Primary Mental Abilities Tests. One stated that teacher recommendations were used at the primary level and these were considered to be quite accurate.

Twelve schools use reading tests such as the Lee-Clark Reading Readiness, Metropolitan Readiness, Harrison-Stroud Reading Readiness, Houghton-Mifflin Reading Tests, Ginn Reading Achievement, Gates Reading Tests, Monroe Reading Aptitude Tests, and Basic Reading Tests. Teacher-made tests and diagnostic tests which followed the basal readers were listed by four of the respondents. All of the schools used testing in some form for diagnostic or for placement purposes.

Other Bases Employed.

The Appleton, Wisconsin schools have been considered ungraded since 1956. Classes are organized with a three-year chronological age spread to afford more flexibility to the children and to the teacher in their pursuit of improved instruction and learning. Thus the

primary block is called the Mixed Primary Group or MPG, and the intermediate block is called the Mixed Intermediate Group or MIG.

Students, in the Appleton schools, are grouped on a somewhat random basis, but with heterogeneity the desirable outcome. The spread of ability and achievement is wide, permitting younger students to be challenged and permitting older students to demonstrate leadership. Development of better study habits, continuous preview and review of learning tasks, and the elimination of serious discipline problems are other advantages claimed by the Appleton schools.

It is contended that there is a high degree of cooperation among all children in the class, regardless of age or abilities. Greater independence and individual initiative on the part of the students exists and a healthy "big brother" and "big sister" attitude among the older students takes place. Group work and committees can be organized better, it is felt, for the needs of some tasks require abilities of greater (or lesser) dimension.

Children at the primary level have the same teacher for three years unless it is felt movement to another class would be beneficial. Classes, then, consist of one-third of the members who have been with the teacher for three years, one-third who have been enrolled in the class for two years, and one-third of the members who are new. It is felt that the teacher knows her students better when fewer new ones enter each year and learning is continuous because the teacher knows just where to begin with the returning students each fall.

Figure III, on page 61, shows the movement of the children through a three-year MPG Cycle. In the figure, the large box at the top of the page shows one-third of the class as being eight year olds who will move to the fourth grade (following the arrow), upon showing mastery of the skills taught in this primary unit. Another third of this class consists of seven-year olds who will remain, for another year, with the same teacher who now knows their needs. The remaining one-third of the class are six-year olds who are new to the class. These youngsters will stay with the same teacher for two more years until the basic skills taught at this primary level are mastered. Subgrouping for instruction is done sooner and more efficiently because the teacher knows the needs of the students.

Summary.

Of the 19 nongraded schools, 18 employ a reading levels approach using testing and factors of developmental level as an aid to placement. The reduction of the range of abilities with which the teacher must cope is one advantage, but the continuous progress permitted for the students is by far the greatest advantage in this plan.

The Van Dyke, Michigan schools place pupils in 14 levels with those who have need of reinforcement grouped in the odd-numbered levels, and those who progress normally grouped in the even-numbered levels. The Milwaukee schools have 12 levels as do the Green Bay, Wisconsin schools. The Mineola, New York schools have 11 levels in the primary block, and 9 in the intermediate block. International Falls, Minnesota

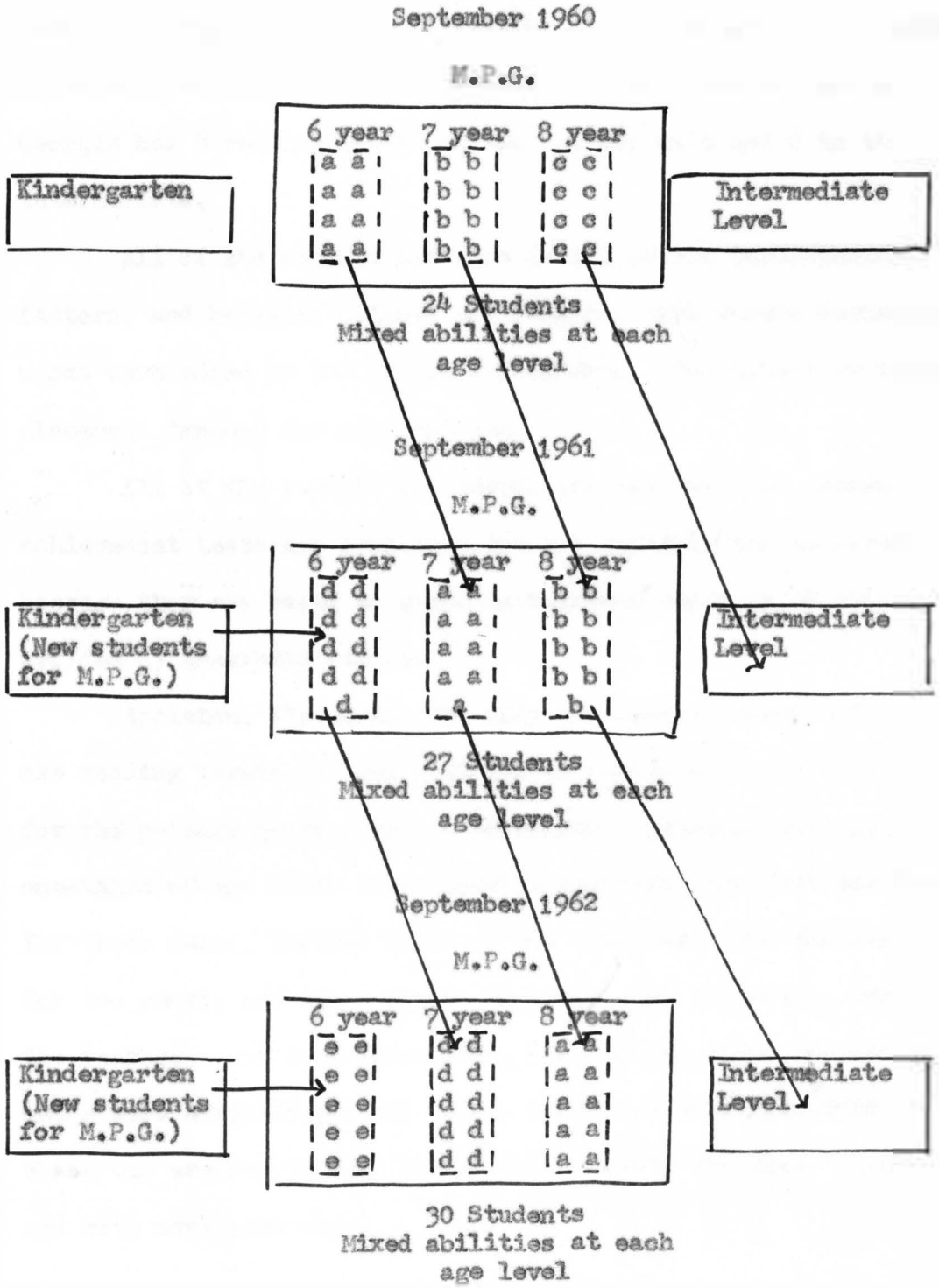

Figure III. How Children Move Through a Three Year M.P.G. Cycle
Taken from Appleton, Wisconsin handbook

uses 8 reading levels, and University City, Missouri has 8 levels which evolved from the Scott Foresman series readers. Coffee County, Georgia has 8 reading levels in the primary unit and 6 in the intermediate.

All of the schools use some or all of the developmental level factors, and boy-girl balance and learning rate versus sequential norms were added by two of the respondents. One school employed a placement teacher for new students.

All of the schools use tests, and one made the comment that achievement tests now available are not suitable for nongraded schools because they are based on grade equivalents which is an evil to be avoided by nongraded schools.

Appleton, Wisconsin, the only responding school which does not use reading levels, allows students to remain with the same teacher for the primary block. With a three-year chronological age spread, one-third of the class (the oldest youngsters) are with the same teacher for three years, another third of the class are with the same teacher for two years, and the youngest, one-third of the class, are new to the teacher. The instructor knows most of her class and can meet their needs more efficiently, and, since there are only one-third of the class who are new to her, sub-grouping within the class is done sooner and with more accuracy.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Since the objectives or goals for each individual should vary in accordance with those variables existent within him which are not controllable, a setting must be staged which will permit attainment of these goals. Parker realized this when he became superintendent of the Quincy Grammar School, and Dewey, in his "real-life school," attempted to meet the needs of students by immediate application of skills in situations thought to be typical of later life. Through the years, many varied plans were instituted to overcome nonpromotion, rigidity, and other faults which seem to have arisen with the lock-step. Some of these were: Harris's plan of frequent promotion and reclassification, Wirt's Platoon School, Carleton Washburne's Winnetka Plan, and Helen Parkhurst's Dalton Plan.

However, removal of the grade barrier and the establishment of means for continuous progress did not take place until 1937 when Western Springs, Illinois, led by Leonard B. Wheat, adopted the "Flexible Progress Group System". Under this plan, the first three grades were replaced with a reading levels program. Students were classified on the basis of their reading achievement and were allowed to progress at their own rates. This plan was abandoned in 1940 and Western Springs has not returned to it since that time.

In 1942, reading levels were heard of again when the Milwaukee schools adopted a "continuous progress plan." Other schools soon

followed this pattern of organization for the following reasons: more attention could be given to individual differences; continuous progress could be assured all students; flexibility in pupil placement would result; and grouping and curriculum changes could be effected. Educators also felt, according to Hildred and Hillson, that the failure to deal adequately with individual differences had led to reading problems, to academic retardation, to failure, and even to dropouts, juvenile delinquency, and emotional illness.

Carbone's research along these lines bore different findings when he compared graded and nongraded schools on five mental health factors. This study favored the graded schools, but there is some doubt as to whether the selected graded schools were of the traditional variety. No doubt there are some schools in the nation which follow firmly the graded pattern, but teachers today are prepared in colleges which teach a theory of education which gives far more attention to individual differences. Such devices as the unit method of teaching and a child-centered curriculum do not lead toward the rigidity so often typical of the traditonal graded school.

Goodlad and Anderson's findings favored the nongraded schools. These authors stated that, wherever statistical data permitted statements on the significance of the differences, a significant difference was rarely reported that was not in favor of the nongraded groups. The graded schools used by Goodlad and Anderson were of the traditional variety.

Definite advantages for nongrading were reported by Perkins and

by Hillson, Johnes, Moore, and Van Devender in their research. Among these were: improved achievement, continuous learning, improved rapport, fulfillment of needs via flexible grouping, earlier identification of the slower students, better adjustment of instruction to individual lags and spurts, and increased teamwork among teachers.

As nongradedness grew in popularity, attention was turned toward defining the term. Two would-be "definers", DiLorenzo and Salter, concluded that the nongraded primary replaced grades one, two, and three, with Kindergarten sometimes included. In their description of the nongraded-primary system the authors referred to above, stated that most schools employ reading levels as the basis for grouping though a few use achievement level in arithmetic and spelling. Others use combinations of all these bases.

Madeline Hunter suggested that there are three dimensions which must be considered in order to provide for individual differences: teaching style, peer group, and educational program. All three of these must be taken into account if a school is to be truly nongraded.

The nongraded type of organization seeks to provide a flexible situation to permit adjustment of the program of learning to the individual pupil. This is not a new concept, for Parker stated these objectives for his Quincy school in 1875. Since progress is to be continuous for all pupils, instructional groups must be formed with this concept in mind. The problem of this research was to survey and report the various bases used by representative nongraded schools in grouping their students.

A questionnaire was prepared and sent to 48 schools selected from literature and mentioned in responses from various authorities in the field. Thirty-one of the schools responded and, of these, nineteen were reported to be nongraded. Eighteen of the nineteen schools employed a reading levels base and the remaining school, Appleton, Wisconsin, had mixed primary and intermediate groups.

Developmental level and testing were used by all of the schools in some form as the bases for establishing instructional groups. The Appleton, Wisconsin schools, additionally, emphasized the unit method of teaching to mixed-ability groups (heterogeneous within a three-year age spread) by experienced, well-educated teachers who realize what and when skills must be taught.

Conclusions

The nongraded program encourages flexibility in administration and is conducive to a continuous progress system. The change in organizational structure alone will not make a school nongraded, for the philosophy of continuous progress for all individuals at varying rates must be accepted by the individual teachers prior to removal of the grade designations. Ungrading is not an easy thing, for it must be accepted by pupils, teachers, parents, and all others involved.

Nongrading isn't a panacea for all of our educational ills, but it is an attempt to apply what we do know about individual differences in the school situation. Gifted children are less prone to under-achieve, nor are slow learners apt to be frustrated by repeated failure.

All children progress steadily, at varying rates, from level to level. Much, of course, depends upon the instructional ability of the staff. School organization does little or nothing to improve instructional practice, for the elimination of grades merely allows opportunity to provide curriculum and instruction in line with the needs of the individual.

Reading level appears to be the most common method of grouping but there are other methods used and further investigation would, no doubt, reveal other plans. The list of nongraded schools, submitted by the subject schools of this study, may be of aid in further research.

The fact that all of the reporting schools used developmental level and testing along with reading achievement does illustrate a real need for adequate record keeping in the schools. A number of the responding schools enclosed typical pupil record forms taken from their files.

It was stressed, by several of the schools, that acceptance of the philosophy of continuous progress by the teachers was of utmost importance. Questionnaire returns included brochures which documented the fact that teachers had made the transition to the changed program and that the change had resulted in improved teaching. Teachers could and did adjust successfully for the most part. The flexibility of the nongraded organization tends to liberate children and teachers in that it permits creativity and encourages continuous progress at varying rates in harmony with the developmental level of the students.

Recommendations

It appears, to the writer that teachers should be given courses which would aid in their understanding and acceptance of a philosophy of continuous progress. Too many teachers are able to teach at only one level and are not able to adjust readily when a child needs help above or below that level. It was claimed, in several of the enclosed brochures, that some difficulty arose in hiring teachers to teach outside the conventional grade boundaries.

In-service training may be the answer: for all teachers want to help the child who is not achieving or the child who tends to sit in boredom waiting for others to catch up. This training program would describe the school's organizational scheme, the underlying philosophy, and certain unique aspects of the operational structure.

Use of the reading levels approach in the primary block appears very sensible. This, along with the unit teaching, should provide continuous progress in all areas of development. In the intermediate block, use could be made of a plan such as the M.P.G. and the M.I.G. found in Appleton, Wisconsin. Unit teaching methods could be employed readily, for it is not necessary that achievement be homogeneous in this approach. Rather, it is desirable that needs of students vary.

Guides prepared on a district level would aid teachers in the intermediate block to know which units are to be taught. Listing of materials and books available within and without the school district would be of definite aid to instructors.

Extensive use of testing would aid the teachers in diagnosis of needs and would eliminate much guessing and time wasted in determining just what problems exist. However, many teachers have not had the training needed to know just what type of test would be best suited to the situation. The college teacher training program could add such a requirement.

Certain terms, used in literature on the nongraded movement and in other innovations in education, are not used uniformly. This could be corrected in the literature and at the college level in teacher training with insistance that the literature follow one specific definition for each of the new terms now being employed. For example, many reading levels schemes are merely horizontal innovations with no vertical revision of the structure. Such a plan should not be called a reading levels plan.

Time should be given for staff meetings to allow curriculum revision. Teachers should be encouraged to take an active part in any changes being made and in the evaluation of innovations currently being employed.

Teacher strengths should be recognized and utilized. Many teachers are more than willing to share any abilities or talents they may have. Cooperative teaching and team teaching bring the staff closer and permit better use of teaching talent.

Provisions for new teachers should be made to aid in adjusting to the unfamiliar situation. Discussion within a building and among the personnel of the several buildings regarding common problems, current

practices, and new developments will bring better staff communication and will enlighten those new to the system.

Professional help should be sought for areas of teaching which are troublesome. Expansion of the guidance program (or initiation of one if there is none) should also take place. Guidance courses could also be included in the in-service training program.

Contact with the community should be constant. Resource visitors, field trips, assemblies and other methods may employ members of the community. Constant growth on the part of the teachers and community is as necessary as is continuous progress for the children.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The nongraded school is intended to provide for continuous progress for each pupil. Its proponents claim that its use tends to eliminate inherent evils of the traditional lock-step graded program. Placement in such schools varies among the many nongraded schools now in existance. This questionnaire seeks to determine the presence and extent of certain bases employed by representative nongraded schools in grouping their students.

1. Name of school district_____

2. Number of pupils in average daily attendance (Kindergarten through sixth)_____

3. Number of full-time teachers in district (Include special teachers, i.e. music, remedial reading, etc., for Kindergarten through sixth)
_____

4. Basis for placement to determine the child's group:*

_____Reading levels or reading program (please tell what provisions are made for differences in achievement existing in other subject-matter areas)

_____Developmental level (please check factors considered)
_____Capacity
_____Maturity factors
_____Social adjustment
_____Work habits
_____Other (please explain)

_____Testing (please list what tests and when they are given during the child's development)

_____Other (please explain)

5. Are the groups homogeneous or heterogeneous?_____
Is further subgrouping within the classes done?_____

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*Some of the following bases are borrowed from Maurie Hillson.

6. How do you differentiate one room from another, other than by room number?_____

7. What general groupings are used (e.g., primary block, intermediate block, etc.)_____

8. Is the nongrading in your district experimental or practiced throughout the district?_____

9. Do you include Kindergarten in the nongraded portion of your program?_____If yes, does grouping of any kind begin here?_____What are the bases for such groupings?_____

10. At what age do the youngsters begin, or what determines eligivility for Kindergarten?_____

11. Who is responsible for the curriculum in your elementary school?_____
To what extent are the teachers involved in setting up the curriculum?_____

12. Has "nongradedness" enabled you to make better use of teacher strengths?_____How are these strengths used (e.g., team teaching, cycling, etc.)_____

13. How long has nongrading been practiced in your district?

_____one to two years _____five to ten years
_____three to five years _____longer

14. Do you think "nongradedness", as a movement, is spreading in your area?_____If yes, is there a perceptible change?_____
_____In which direction?_____
_____

15. Please list other schools in your area which are nongraded.

Please enclose any pertinent literature you may have available.

APPENDIX B

SELECTED COMMENTS BY RESPONDING SCHOOLS

Englewood, New Jersey. It appears to me that we use differential teaching for differential response, but is this practice really "non-grading"? Even when the content itself is differentiated, for instance, in a social studies class in the sixth grade, into minimums and maximums, we approach non-grading, in instructional behavior. My concept of "non-graded" relates to structure, rather than to method. We do not have a non-graded structure in the Englewood Public Schools. In basal reading instruction, however, children are redeployed (according to a quasi-Joplin plan) on the basis of instructional reading level.

Edina-Morningside Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our involvement in non-graded primary is minimal at the present time. We have a pilot program in only one small school and have been in the experiment only five months; much too short a time to undertake filling out the enclosed questionnaire.

Hermantown Public Schools, Duluth, Minnesota. We have so-called homogeneous or ability grouping, rather than ungraded primary. However, in discussions with others who have the nongraded primary, we find that there is very little difference in the actual operations and procedures (only that the grade label is still used). Archie Beighley, Elementary Principal.

Lido Beach, Long Beach, New York. From 1958 to 1963 the Long Beach schools were in a cooperative research project on the Dual Progress Plan. Although D.P.P. parallels the non-graded organization philosophically, it is not truly a non-graded program. We have, in the past year, implemented some modifications of dual progress which in essence move us even further from non-graded organization.

Middletown, Rhode Island. Middletown, Rhode Island, has a six year non-graded secondary school. Its elementary schools are still enmeshed in the traditional graded structure.

Davidson County, Tennessee. You are evidently thinking the nongraded primary is more extensive than it is in Nashville. Out of 107 schools we have two which are doing something along this line. However, a casual visitation to both schools shows a very great likeness to the graded rooms. Ruth McDonald, Supervisor.

River Forest, Illinois. Although our community is referred to in some of the literature on the nongraded primaries, notably the Goodlad-Anderson book, the reference there has to do with our parent-teacher conference system rather than the nongraded primaries.

Racine, Wisconsin. Our non-graded committee has recently been reorganized and looks as though it will bring about one or two experimental non-graded arrangements during the 1965-66 school year.

Tarkio, Missouri. Nongrading in elementary schools is a long-long process.

Corona, California. This plan is no longer being used in our district because of extreme growth.

Torrance, California. We are sorry but we no longer have multi-grades.

Western Springs, Illinois. I am sorry that I will not be able to be of help to you concerning the nongraded primary system because it was abandoned in 1940.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF NONGRADED SCHOOLS REPORTED BY THE RESPONDENTS

Midland School, Los Angeles, California
Bellevue Public Schools, District #405, Bellevue, Washington
Lab. School, Mr. David Haimbach, Fresno State, Fresno, California
Englewood Elementary School, Englewood, Florida

Beverly Hills "levels" plan, Beverly Hills, California
North Side School, East Williston, New York
James Lindsey, Grand Oaks School, 7901 Rosswood, Citrus Heights, California
LaMesa School, 8100 Orange Avenue, LaMesa, California

Oceanside Schools, California
Marin County, Dixie School, San Rafael, California
John H. West School, Bethpage, New York
Valley Winds Elementary School, 17170 Tribune Street, Granada Hills, California

West Corners School, Union Center, West Corners, New York
Melbourne High School, Melbourne, Florida
Nova High School, Nova, Florida
Glendale, Wisconsin

Hastings Elementary School, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Telfair County Schools, McRae, Georgia
Waycross, Georgia

Snohomish, Washington
Sedro Wooley, Washington
West Valley, Spokane, Washington
Niagara Falls, New York

East Wenatchee, Washington
Quincy, Washington
Drew-Pyle School, Wilmington, Delaware, Dr. Kathryn Hazeur, Principal
East Williston, New York

Ithaca City School System, New York
David Fernandez, Alisal School, 1437 Del Monte Avenue, Salinas, California
San Juan District, San Juan, California
Modesto, California

Vallejo, California
San Jose, California
San Mateo, California
Clayton, Missouri